

The Dome: a Quarterly con- taining Examples of All the Arts

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Architecture

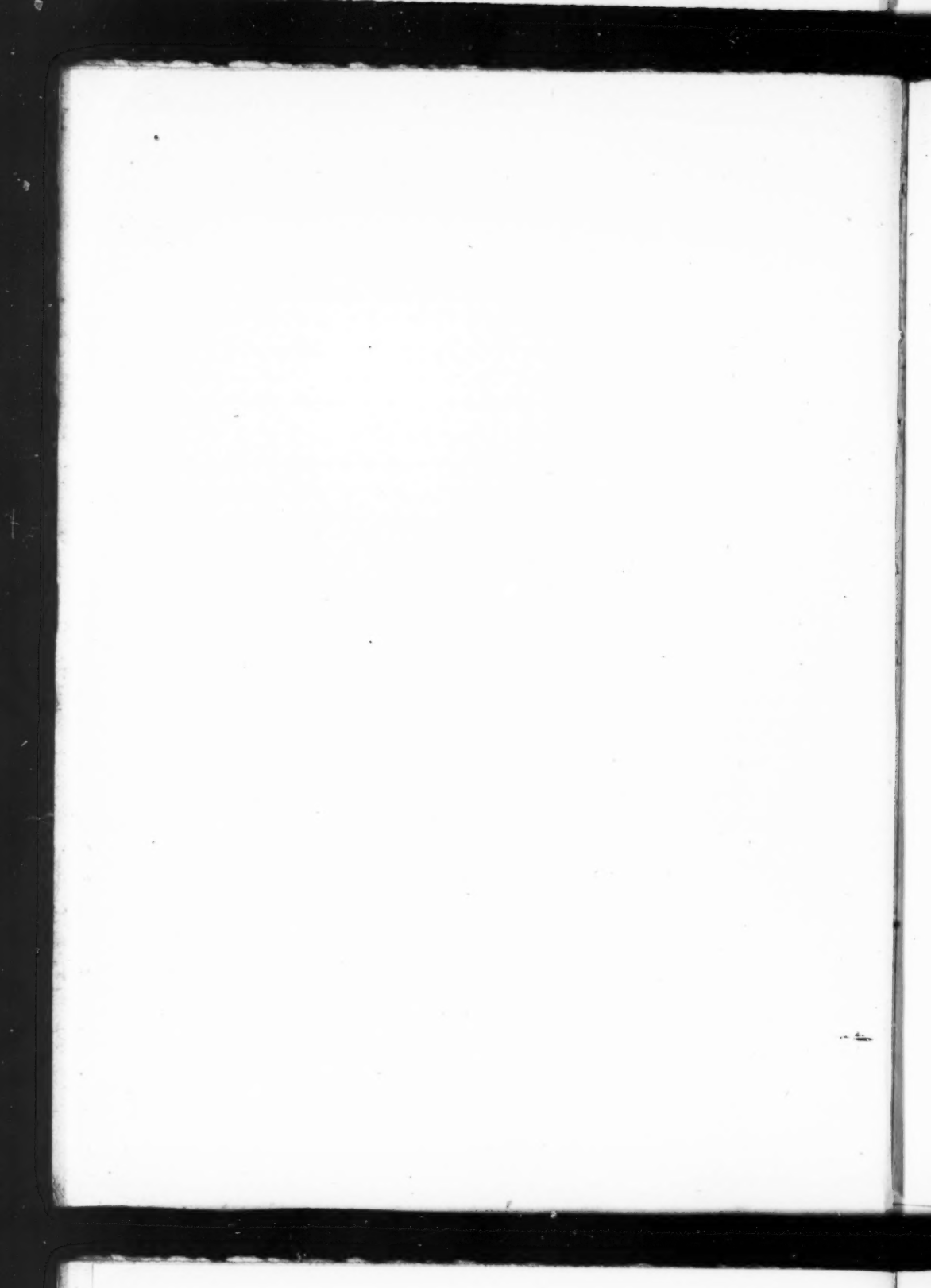
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Die Alte Gasse

H. Bräuer



Literature



The Concord of Clofield

Everyone in Clofield knows that a ghost once passed through the vicarage by night. The vicar, who alone saw the apparition, kept his story sacred, relating it only once or twice in the most private manner, but long before he died, and ever since, everyone has known that he saw, or thought he saw, a spirit. Very diverse and fantastic are the garbs in which the ghost story has gone forth, by reason of the imagination of the town-folk. The doctor's wife told me the truth. She has been confined to her arm-chair for many years, and thus she knows everything that everyone does, and the truth of it all, for she is an honest old lady and shrewd.

She lives in the plain brick house, not far from the church, which stands between the row of old cottages and the small greengrocer's shop. She takes a keen interest in the greengrocer, and his wife and daughters, and the caretaker of the church, who is her nearest respectable neighbour on the other side. That, I think, was why these people always had a particular light shed upon their lives from the ghost tale as she told it.

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The main and unvarying parts of the tale are as clear to my mind as if I had seen them all enacted, partly because I know the scene so well—the old grey buildings, the March weather, and even the starlings which are blown about the church on windy days. I have seen the photograph taken by the vicar's first visitor, and heard Rosy's pretty tripping tongue as she prattles to her children.

I would like to say, first, that the vicar, who died some years ago, believed to the last that he had heard a voice from the other side of death, while the doctor always believed that the poor creature had been wandering in the cold night wind before she died. Mr. Burke, the gardener, who, in his way, is an educated man, with a Cockney accent, has always said that it was "all imagination."

The Hall gardens are the glory of Clofield. They stretch for the eighth of a mile, it may be, on the slopes to the south of the Hall. Long ago there was a prosperous abbey here, and at one time a bishop's palace. The abbey church still stands, part of it new, most of it old; and hard by to the south of it, forming a quarter-circle, stand the Hall, the vicarage, the house of the head gardener, and the beadle's cottage. These were built long ago on the site of the abbey, with portions of the old walls worked into them. Their gardens lie to the back; they face a broad strip of sandy road with emerald edges of creeping grass, in which stand three plane trees that touch the church roof

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with their branches. On the other side of the church is a fragment of the old village street—cottages with undulating roofs, and, projecting into the street, the blank-looking front of that substantial house which for many generations has belonged to the village doctor. For the last twenty years the term "Clofield" has connoted much more than this. To the east of the doctor's house is the new town—brick-coloured, garish, swarming with poverty which is not picturesque, and vices which have no rural softening. In the centre of the town, not a mile from the church, stands the Baptist chapel. It is large, and has a look of florid prosperity. Close by is the hospitable dwelling of the minister, at that time one Hopkins.

From this house issued one afternoon a pretty little nursemaid with anxious face. She betook herself towards the church, and turned into the small shop next the doctor's house, in which flowers and vegetables were displayed.

The little maid's cheeks were very red, for she had been running; and the grey eyes, which were large with excitement, fixed themselves upon the careworn face of a woman behind the counter.

"Mother, they do say that the new vicar 'ull be 'ere to-morrow, and such a turning out and a routing there 'ull be, yer never saw the like. I 'eerd the minister say as 'e was a red-hot Churchman, and wouldn't lose a day, as the parish 'ad been so neglect'; but 'e's coming, and going to have missionaries down an' all."

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"Th' art Rosy to-day, sure enough," said the mother, fondly stretching out a bony hand and lightly touching the pretty cheek.

"They do say, mother, that 'e'll be round a-scolding every one on us that doesn't go to church reg'lar, and don't ye see that Tom's father is the beadle, and Tom expecting to work into the place, like?"

"Hush now! What's Tom to thee, Rosy? 'E's not been a-speaking to thee without a word to father or me?"

The girl was toying now with some little bunches of snowdrops that lay upon the counter. The only sound that disturbed their talking was a weak cough from an inner room, where a man was lying just out of earshot.

"Minister's that peppery, mother, since 'e 'eerd that 'e'd fly out like anything if I said I go to church. They'd never let me stay on if I didn't go to chapel—and me so fond of the children; there isn't another place I could 'ave in the town. We couldn't afford for me to come home now father's so ill, and if I go away for a place I shall never see you, nor father, nor"— She added after a minute, "Tom 'ud be giving up caring if I was away."

The mother sighed. "It mayn't turn out no way so bad, luv."

"It'll be just the same as at Barton. For they do say that there the vicar's wife made all the church folk take their custom from the shops as go to chapel. It'll be the same here, though this one's a bacheldor. I 'eerd the

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minister telling missus. 'E said the clergy were all o' the same sex nowadays. They's all I, 'e said."

"That's the wrong word ye've got, luv."

"Tom says 'is father 'ull be so set to please the new vicar for fear of losing his place, an' Mr. Hopkins 'ull be mad at me for ever looking at Tom."

A few days after that, the new vicar was showing a clerical friend through the precincts of the church and glebe. A cold March wind swept round the grey tenantless Hall and swayed the ivy on the vicarage porch, shaking the lime trees overhead. The two clergymen, emerging from the southern door, stood opposite the gabled house belonging to the head gardener.

The new vicar was a fair man of comfortable aspect, but in his blue eyes there was the wistful look of intense desire. This desire was embodied in the homely proverb that a new broom should sweep clean. Whatever of mediocrity in self or work he had formerly tolerated was, in this day of new beginnings, to be thrust out.

The head gardener came out from his house door. He was a short, stout man, keen of face, and well dressed. "My nearest neighbour," thought the vicar, and he hurried across the road beneath the planes. The gardener was a Londoner, and well known to be learned. They stood just below a dark barred window.

"No family, sir, except my books. I have enough of them to keep company with—

"Yes, sir, I have a half-sister, but she's been an invalid for many years. She wouldn't see you if you called, but

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I'd be pleased to show you the place at any time. There's a bit of the old cloisters in my garden, and the postern door through your wall, sir, is a bit of the genuine old stuff, I believe."

It was on the invalid that the vicar focussed his mental eye. The gardener looked perplexed at his persistence, lifted the stiff felt hat he wore, and rubbed the level crown of his grey head with the fingers of the hand that held his hat. He was literally a level-headed man.

"The truth is, sir, Miss Burke isn't quite right in her mind. The medical man says it's not insanity—some hysterical affection. It's a good many years since she's spoken, and she has a special objection to the clergy.

"No, I don't go in for Christianity, sir; it is science that I take an interest in. I am content to leave what I can't know anything about. If you want to know why Miss Burke objects to the clergy, I can tell you in a few words. She got into trouble in her youth. The man she married, the foreman at one of the mills here, turned out to have another wife. It's as wicked a place as can be, except in so far as the Methodists have knocked some morals into a few. That's what I think is the good of religion; it sugars the moral pill, sir, with sentiment and fancy for those that haven't the grit to swallow it plain. When we get more of them educated they will want the sugar less. But my half-sister, a tall, handsome, black-eyed thing as she was, found out that the man she had married was a devil, so she came home again."

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The vicar was glad to have an opportunity to show sympathy. "Ah! and not finding consolation, hysteria was the very natural result; but if you had been able to teach her, Mr. Burke, the truth of that line of Moore's hymn with which, as a reader, you are doubtless familiar, 'Earth has no sorrow which Heaven cannot heal'"—

There was a faint twinkle in the gardener's eye. "The story does not end there. She took to Christianity just, as you say, for consolation. It was a time when there was a strange preacher down here, and she took to it in a queer way. I have known people who seemed to have different ideas of it, some one and some another, but she got hold of the idea that Christianity meant that its founder was always an invisible presence beside her, and that she could advise with him about all that she said and did. Well, of course it took the form of her obeying always the best dictates of her heart and conscience, and she was wonderful contented. I hoped it would last. Women need their fancies to live by just as children do."

"My friend," said the vicar, "I cannot in honesty listen to your explanation of the Christian faith. We have hold of the feet of Christ."

"Call it what you will, sir; I call it *imagination*."

"You were going to continue"—

"I was just about to add that there got up a great opposition just then between the Church folks and the Baptists. Our last vicar did not do much, but when the

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Baptists got lively he got a curate down who set the place by the ears. He talked, and the Baptists talked louder. And one day when she was in the house my sister gave a great cry, and we ran to her, and she said, "'Tis plain my Lord cannot be with them, and yet they both do pray.' From that her mind darkened, and the hysteria grew on her. It's a long time since she took this fit not to speak, and the doctor thinks she will have lost her voice for want of use. Good-day; I shall be pleased to show you round the buildings at any time, and the gardens."

The vicar's visitor, who had an artistic turn, came walking backwards, his eye travelling from the carving on the south door up wall and roof and tower.

"This would be the best place for a photograph," he said, "if one could get farther back."

He stepped back and back, until his shoulders rested against the dark window in the wall of the gardener's house, and the vicar moved beside him, his outward eye upon the building, his mind upon the spiritual Church.

"How terrible is the guilt of schism!" he remarked absently.

The friend replied cheerfully, for his mind was upon his photograph, "Yes, yes, you have got your work cut out for you here. You are in a very hotbed of Dissent."

"It passes my imagination to conceive how these sectarians cannot see that they are causing the little ones to offend," said the vicar.

It so chanced that the Baptist minister and the minister

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of a small Methodist cause which had been started at the farther side of the town, came by just then, walking together to a temperance meeting to be held at the next village. The new vicar was ready again; his was the right to make acquaintance with high and low. Kindliness blent with a touch of distant severity was now his rôle. Both Dissenters, who had been talking and walking easily, drew themselves up with an air of company manners. They were neither of them men of much education or refinement. One of them simpered under the gentlemen's greeting, and one of them swaggered with an awkward claim to equality. Behind the exterior manner of their greeting there was the defiance of conviction.

The vicar made bland general inquiries concerning the affairs of the town. With trained perceptions he took the measure of both men as to mental ability and social position. There was another element in the character of each which is commonly called the spiritual life, but at this moment it shrank so far out of sight that the vicar, who was not seeking it with much faith or desire, made no note of it at all. He came back against the low window of the gardener's house, where the camera was being focussed.

"They are neither of them persons of weight," he said. "The Baptist has perhaps the qualities to attract the people; a little vulgarity and servility in a fairly honest and respectable character go far in that direction. I suppose these two are honest men. I always say we

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should deal with Dissenters as the law deals with us all, counting us innocent till we are proved guilty. I always believe them to be in earnest until something proves the contrary."

A yellow watery light from the western cloud began to shine upon the square grey tower above them, making high lights and shadows. Three starlings quarrelling together as they flew, dropped from the tower upon the slate roof and made a blur in the photograph. The yellow patches on the trunks of the planes met the glow with such sympathy of colour that it almost seemed as if sunlight flickered.

Behind the two clergymen, within the dark barred window of the gardener's house, a dark figure like a shadow moved and withdrew.

That night was Rosy's "evening out." The beadle's wife had invited her to supper. Rosy came in the tremulous flutter of hope and fear in which she always met Tom. There was nothing heroic or queenly about Rosy. She ardently desired that Tom should get so far in his love-making as to speak of marriage; she ardently feared anything that might come in the way of so joyful a consummation. Thinking little of her own attractions and much of his, she was withal a modest little soul, far too shy to say much in the bliss of his presence, yet betraying her desire to please by so many artless wiles, that Tom's father and mother were almost as much captivated as Tom himself.

Said the beadle's wife, "You might take Rosy home,

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Tom, by the lane. I'm fearing if she holds by the Church, as in duty bound she ought, her folks never having been Dissenters, she'll be losing her place, and maybe she'll be leaving the town for a bit, as her mother was telling me."

Rosy walked shyly and silently beside Tom by a part of the old cloister wall in the beadle's little three-cornered bit of ground.

She was just a little less shy with Tom than she was with his parents. "Mr. Hopkins is going to preach a whole set of sermons against the vicar, leastways, against the Church, on the horrors of doctoring, I 'eerd him say."

Tom was thinking entirely of Rosy, and not of the conversation on general themes which she was trying to keep up. He was not a reverent youth; he longed unspeakably to get hold of the parsons and knock their heads together. He could not possibly marry for some years to come, and if Rosy must go away it was a dreary prospect.

Something not love, or anything akin to love, made Tom slacken speed and Rosy shrink nearer to him.

"What was it?" he asked, after a minute.

"I thought I see'd something pass, through the chink of the wall, but it wasn't Mr. Burke nor the woman that works there."

"I thought I see'd it too," said Tom briefly.

"Do ye think it could have been a ghost, Tom?"

"No; Mr. Burke says there ain't no ghosts."

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"It couldn't be that Miss Burke that none of us ever sees? The doctor told mother that she's an awful historical woman."

Late that night the new vicar knelt at his private devotions in the desolate study where the old vicar had idled away a long life. Bookshelves, empty now, striped the time-stained walls from floor to ceiling. A heavy screen was fixed to shut out draughts from the low mullioned window that opened only upon shrubs and lawn. More shut in from the imperious beat of the world's pulse a man could hardly be. The new vicar felt the disgrace of his predecessor's seclusion keenly, repenting in vicarious humiliation for this sin as well as his own. He set his crucifix temporarily upon the still empty centre table and knelt before it.

When he had been praying silently for a long time, and the church clock had struck the midnight hour, he became aware, even through closed lids, that someone was looking at him. He opened his eyes and saw the figure of a woman standing just within the screen. She was tall, and wore black garments. Her face was so white and thin that it seemed to the vicar as if his gas-light, flickering with the wind that strained against the house, almost shone through the pallid features. There was but one gas jet in a large dreary room.

From the first moment the vicar seems to have believed that he saw a spirit. He was a sensible man, and as he was there and we were not, it is only fair to admit that he may have been the best judge. It was

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this belief, the thought that the hour was in a sense supreme, which no doubt caused all that his visitor said and did to be branded for ever on his memory. When he told the doctor's wife, he said that his mind was prepared to feel the full solemnity of such a visitant, but that the presence was not only solemn, but also far more gruesome and awful than he could have before conceived. Not only was there an aspect of hideous death about the countenance and black cerements, but the accent and speech used (for the ghost spoke) were just such as the uneducated use in this life, and the manner was just that of a sickly woman, embittered, ironical, and defiant.

She held her head a little on one side, poised upward, turning slightly away from him, as if from some nervous affection she could not hold it straight; she looked at him the while. She lifted a hard, work-worn hand, which was now white and bloodless, and, pointing at him and then at the crucifix, she spoke sharply, sarcastically, but the tone had a far-off, unearthly sound.

"Hypocrite!" she said.

The vicar never denied the fear he felt; he showed himself all the braver because he feared. He got up, keeping his eyes fixed upon her; he found his voice, and said, as firmly as he might, that he was no hypocrite—a statement which in all modesty he called Heaven to witness.

She pointed again at the crucifix, and jerked a crude question defiantly at him.

"Did *he* think that *his* company and Paradise were

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too good for the thief who spoke kindly to him when *he* was dying?"

"Miserable soul!" cried the vicar. "Who are you and what do you desire from me?"

She took no notice of the question.

"You've come here to represent *him*. Well, there's two men here better than thieves; they've been praying for the town, one of them these twelve years, and they've lived poor and worked hard for *him*, and now you've come there's three of you standing together, an' hell lying all about you. What I want to know is, how are you going to behave to them two?"

"I shall always behave to them with perfect civility," said the vicar firmly.

Her hand had fallen. She raised her finger again, pointing to the crucifix, further interrogation sternly indicated.

The vicar hesitated. He would not for worlds have promised to a ghost more than he could perform.

"I shall always treat them with dignified kindness."

She gave a nervous jerk of the head. An awful smile of sarcasm parted her lips, and again she lifted her bony fingers and pointed to the crucifix.

The vicar said afterwards that he felt himself as under a spell of her intense questioning, and all the outsides of life seemed to strip themselves from the objects of his mental vision.

"There is no dignity but humility." He sighed and

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added, with heaving breast, "According to their light they may be far holier men than I, and yet"—

He spoke a word here concerning the wrong of schism and the light the schismatic might have if he would, but if she heard it she did not heed.

She pointed again to the crucifix, looking at him with eyes that seemed to throw rays of black light from out their withered lids. "If you think there's a chance that *he* might have something to say to their prayers as well as to yours, have you asked them to pray for you? Have you prayed for them that they may do all the good they can in their own way? Have you asked them to pray with you that *he* would come in amidst you three—you three standing together here and hell lying all around?"

Almost before she had finished asking this in the quick, bitter tones of her far-off voice, she broke into a sarcastic laugh, as if at the impossibility of what she suggested.

The sound of the laugh, the vicar said, was such as a fiend might make who feigned mirth while he trembled because he believed. As she laughed her thin lip was drawn up above her teeth, and it seemed so dry that it would not cover them again. For the seventh time she lifted her finger and pointed at the crucifix, but he saw now that it was the finger of scorn.

The vicar's heart was filled with deepest grief. He snatched the crucifix and hid it from her mockery against his breast. He had no anger for her; he only asked in solemn pity—

"Poor, poor soul, if you are suffered to come upon

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this mission, are you thus so far lost?" He had some thought that he could have helped her. "Who are you?" he cried again.

At that, her dry lips closing with difficulty over her teeth, she turned to him with the air of a light woman who would act a fantastic part. "If you please, sir, I am one who knows just enough of him you call your master to know that you don't serve him, and just enough of such as you to make me believe that there is no God; but if I may make so bold as to say it, I believe in the hell that you believe in, an' it's lying on all the town, an' it's crawling into your heart."

Here she dropped him a curtsey, the old-fashioned curtsey that the vicar had wished to revive among the girls and women, for he thought it becoming in working women to bob when the priest went by. He said that after that night it gave him pain to see the smallest girl bend her knees to him.

As for the ghost, when she had dropped her curtsey, smiling that vicious smile, she turned, and, throwing her glance and smile behind her as she moved, she added, "I'm gone out into the cold." She shivered and moaned again as she moved down the room—"Into the cold."

But the vicar threw himself upon his knees, and, shutting his eyes upon the sight he could no longer bear, prayed for her in agony. So fervently did he find himself able to pray, that he thought that even yet he might save the lost soul.

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How long she stayed in the room he did not know; he thought he heard her moving about upon the bare floor. After a while the night wind blew upon him with a blast that seemed to have forced the window open. He saw that he was alone; he had an impression that she had been attracted by the opening of the window and had just passed out. He had no fear now. As our hearts often smooth themselves out with the relief of tears, his had grown strong and serene in the fervour of prayer. With the desire that she should not in truth go out "into the cold" without a word of love, he followed into the howling night. A high araucaria upon his lawn was casting its crooked arms wildly with hideous gestures against the glimmering sky, like a devil in glee. All the shrubs were bending and sobbing. There came a long, low shout from the trees in the Hall gardens, and the walls of the vicarage and the gardener's house creaked and strained.

Out there in the wind the vicar bethought him that it would be well to know certainly that no living woman was near. There was but one door that led from the vicar's lawn, and that was the old postern that opened into his neighbour's small garden. Thither the vicar went, and up to the gardener's back door, at which he knocked. The gardener came to the door, spectacles upon his nose, a huge book in his hand. No one, he averred, had gone out from his house that night. His servant went home by night, and his sister had long been asleep. He rubbed his head with two fingers of

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the hand that held the book as he said this, staring surprisedly at the vicar.

The vicar paced upon his lawn in the wind, and before he went in the gardener came in his turn to the postern and called him. There was that in his voice which made the vicar run.

"I went up, sir, to make sure that Miss Burke was sleeping"—The gardener was panting; the two men were hurrying up a little dark stair.

The vicar was led into an upper chamber. The gardener had hastily set his lamp upon a chair. In the bed his sister lay. Her black dress had not been removed; her face, the same face that the vicar had lately seen, was lying sideways upon the pillow, the chin raised somewhat as with a nervous gesture. But death, it seemed, had by a caress smoothed away all bitterness from the lines of the features. She lay with eyes closed, weary but comforted by sleep.

"How long—?" asked the vicar.

The gardener laid his hand upon the corpse. "She's cold and stiff, sir. It's been some good time since."

The vicar was not a weak man, but he cowered before the glimpse he believed he had had of this soul issuing into the desolate, Godless vast. All that night he kept vigil, and until they laid her in the grave.

It is my business to tell stories, not to have opinions. A pious man once said to me concerning Clofield, that he thought the clash of arms between religious bodies kept effort alert, and set men seeking for truth who

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would otherwise sleep. He said that the vicar did ill to make so many modest overtures of love to the schismatic parsons.

The doctor's wife did not think so, but she had leanings towards Dissent. She always finished the story with soft triumph.

"And the word 'opposition' was never so much as spoken between Christians while the good vicar lived; and the Methodist and the Baptist each one grew a great deal more earnest; and Rosy lived on in her place, and was sent to church regularly till she married Tom; and Mr. Hopkins—he wept like a child when the good vicar died."

L. Dougall.

The Deserted Village

Her home was in a hamlet, fragrant, quaint,
Where meadow pathways lost themselves in
green

That brightened till no trace of foot was
seen ;

Where wandered little streams without restraint,
That teased the drowsy day with babblings faint,

Now hiding slyly lofty reeds between,

Now baring wanton breasts, which pebbles clean
Adorned. And here my love was queen and saint.
Hers were the timorous dew, the chattering rain,

The songs flung up by birds from tree-tops high.
She was the star-flow'r of that bright domain,

The sun-flow'r of its overarching sky.
She went: and till her steps return again

This hamlet of my heart in mists must lie.

Louis Barsac.

The River in Flood : A Leaf from a "Liber Veritatis"

Yesterday, towards evening, the untidy clouds flung over the sky by the warm west wind broke into persistent rain; and this morning the proud hills, so lately ranked, like silver-armoured Crusaders, in dazzling mail of snow, lay stripped and humbled by those swart paynims, Storm and Flood. Swelling yellow and turbulent, all the moorland streams tore with wanton rushings down scant channels and over scared banks. Impetuous wanderers, too long restrained by bonds of ice from their goal, they now race madly to the broad river, only to be sucked up heedlessly in the heavy swirl of its brimming torrent.

The river is in flood. It rends itself savagely against the pointed piers of the old stone bridge; then, stung to fury by such trivial let, bounds back all wrath and foam.

Round the shapely curve of river-bank it comes with all a Mississippi's majestic roll, and a rich bronze gleam caught from the spring sky. Winter crimsons and

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sombre greys have vanished with the rain-clouds. Heaven is young again and fresh in sweet blue and faint pinks, not without a gleam here and there of gold. The grassy river-curve is green and cool down to the rush of the resistless flood, and on it thrives a tree, clean-trunked, elegant, with the sky behind its slim branches.

All at once the bow of the river turns turquoise blue, with smooth touches of gold. It is Holland. Here are green flat fields, with blue tenderness of water. That solitary tree on the curve were a resting windmill in dimmer light, and that range of small blue hills on the horizon clouds of evening.

No. It is England. Etched below the hills is a line of delicate brown trees, and looking back one sees white churning waves and a lustrous stretch of distant river framed in three exquisite turns of old grey stone. A milk-cart from some outlying farm nears the bridge. Half the highway is drowned in rippling shallows, the river's overflow. The cart jogs through with pleasant splash, and on go driver and milk-cans to the village.

A yellow demi-lune is afloat in the sky. The warring of waters under the bridge is the only sound. In the river, a few feet from the flooded road, stand five or six half-submerged trees, wealing the flying stream with their long whip-like branches. Down the current a black bobbing branch comes sweeping. It reels in eerie frolics as it is swirled swiftly along the smoother water, and tossed to the chaffering waves. Away it goes past

The River in Flood

villages, fields, steeples, and little brooks, each with its small clear voice and its own song, hastening foolishly to swell the river's dull chorus and at length the large wailing of the immense sea.

The mists are rising. The stream grows pale and the fields are still. There is no sound at all save the warring of the waters under the bridge, and the fret of the river searching always for the sea.

Annie Dawson.

A Song of Brotherhood

Once in the tender moonlight
I wakened out of sleep:
Unclouded was all heaven,
And foamless all the deep.

I saw them through the window,
The homely sea and sky:
We seemed such friends that moment,
Such brothers, God and I.

James Medborough.

Near Nature's Heart

A Pastoral Play

Act i

Scene:—*A meadow, with haycocks. On the Right a hedge and a stile. On the Left Frank Phipleigh working at a canvas on an easel. His dress is that of a grand-opera rustic, spotlessly clean and of picturesque cut. He steps back and examines his work with evident dissatisfaction.*

FRANK:—No, sir! Not half, not a quarter bad enough. Yet I've put the horizon exactly half-way between the top and bottom, and the church exactly half-way between the two sides, and I've made these frightful straight lines of—what you call 'em—haycocks meet together quite small at the back, like a Board School lesson in perspective, and I've drawn in thirteen cows so that you could count their fifty-two legs,—and somehow it isn't bad enough yet! (*He flings himself full length beside a haycock.*)

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I see. Atmosphere. Must keep it out at all costs. Grand idea—to-morrow I'll do a round of pubs, studying signboards. There's nothing like exposing yourself to the influence of the old masters. Let me see. There's "The Cheese and Tankard," and "The Pig and Pickle-tub," and "The Spotted Ox," that I've seen already. I'll do the lot, and drink the health of the good old *Touchstone* in every one of them. (*Draws a newspaper from his pocket and reads :—*)

"Returning from Mr. Phipleigh's exhibition with these criticisms in our minds, we found upon our desk a review-copy of Miss Mary Cowley's *Swansongs*. The coincidence was only less odd than useful; for a glance through the book opened our eyes to the fact that mankind is blessed with two Mr. Phipleighs — or two Miss Cowleys, if you prefer it so. Mr. Phipleigh is Miss Cowley in paint; and Miss Cowley is Mr. Phipleigh in printer's ink and with a very pretty margin. In the work of both there is the same pretentiousness, along with the same glaring incompetence. Whether there is cleverness or not we need not discuss; for, in a work of art, what we want first and foremost is Truth. In these days, when those who are unable to manage it themselves are taken into the country by the charitable, it is incredible that Miss Cowley and Mr. Phipleigh have never been out of London; but it is not less plain that whenever they have gone where fields are green, bad weather or obstinacy has kept them both indoors. Candidly, we should like to know if Mr. Phipleigh has

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ever studied Nature for half an hour, save at second-hand in the more eccentric picture-shows; and we are equally curious to learn whether Miss Cowley, who sings of water-lilies to the point of mannerism, would recognise one in a country pond. Her botany competes in impossibility with Mr. Phippleigh's zoology. We advise both these young people neither to enter a gallery nor open a book for a year. Let them leave London a hundred miles behind and get nearer Nature's heart."

(FRANK *refolds the paper.*) Hear, hear! Here I am, so "near Nature's heart" that I can hear it beating—unless it's some beastly agricultural steam-engine. "London a hundred miles behind"! So it is. I hunted up the first place in the A.B.C. where no decent trains stop and the fare's exactly eight-and-fourpence third class, and here I am at Popplewold, a hundred miles to a yard. And I've been here a whole week, and can't paint badly enough even yet. Never mind. "Nivver dispeer," as I ought to say now I'm got up like Hodge or Goiles or Chawbacon. Give me another month, and I'll turn into a regular bipod camera, doing colour-photography by hand. The *Touchstone* shall pat me on the back yet, and I'll hang in the suburbs between Marcus Stone and Leader, and who knows that I shan't even be served up as an oleograph in a Christmas number? (*He springs up and seizes his brush.*)

No more of this thing to-day, though. I must catch the spirit of the pub-sign men before I presume. And

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surely I've earned an hour to please myself in. I'll go on with that portrait. I'll call it "An Ideal Head"—No—I'll paint her name to inspire me. (*Places another canvas on the easel, and makes the letters slowly in the corner, repeating each word to himself as finished.*) "Portrait—of—Mary—Cowley." (*After a pause.*) What can she be like, I wonder?—and how strange we have never met, save in a snarling column of that bilious *Touchstone*! Genius she has, I know. Her pen's worth a thousand of my brush. And strength. While I'm at Popplewold like a fool, no doubt she has scorned the impudence of an ignorant scribbler, and gone steadily on her way. And beauty? I don't know. Probably not. But whatever she is in actual life, whether she's handsome or homely, queenly or insignificant, I know what I shall make her on this. She shall be her poetry made visible. She shall be more beautiful than her own water-lilies. (*He sets to work.*)

Mary Cowley, *dressed as a country girl, approaches from the Right. Her becoming print gown is quite unsoiled and untumbled. She carries a market-basket.*

MARY (*leaning against the stile*):—So this is the Truth—this Popplewold. Then I prefer Lies. (*After a pause.*) Why have I come, then? and why do I stop? Because I haven't a spark of true manliness in me. Instead of feeding the fire with that Philistine *Touchstone's* impudent prescription of twelve months' beans and buttermilk, I go and rush away from everything. Still, here I am, and though I'm very silly and very weak, I'll show the

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Touchstone that if I didn't it wasn't because I couldn't. *Lays of a Country Lass*—that'll do. I'll crowd the book with birds and beasts till it's a regular Noah's Ark. I'll take Tate and Brady as a model for metre. Every page shall reek of this frightful Popplewold. And perhaps some day I shall be presented at a school breaking-up, along with Mrs. Hemans and Eliza Cook, with round corners and gilt edges, as a Prize for Early Rising. And the *Touchstone* will try me and find me fine gold. (*She takes a paper from her basket, glances at it, and replaces it.*) "Mr. Phipleigh is Miss Cowley in paint." How mad that horrid *Touchstone* man would be if he knew he had paid me the only compliment I've ever prized, and that I've drawn a little frame of gold ink all round it! Whenever I've seen Frank Phipleigh's pictures, I've found myself crying, "There is your sonnet, your ballad, your lyric, made visible and cleared of every flaw." (*She is silent a few moments.*)

Who is he, I wonder? No one seems to know him, or even to have seen him. Perhaps it's better, though. He'd be sure to turn out a little man with an inconsistent nose and unpardonable hair. Let me keep my Ideal. I have his full-length portrait in my mind, and some of his soul too, I think. A man—he's that at least, I'm sure. And how full of scorn he would be, or perhaps of laughter, if he knew that the girl who is called his artistic double has been feeble enough to obey the *Touchstone's* orders to the letter, and bury herself a hundred miles from town! Yet if he has read *Swansongs*

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—or, better still, *The Trout among the Water-lilies*—men like fish—oh, but he hasn't! Did he see the *Touchstone*, I wonder? If he did—if he looked into one of my books—he might wonder if Mary Cowley . . . (*She loses herself in a reverie. At last she raises her head, mounts the stile, and catches sight of Phipleigh.*)

Oh dear! There's a rustic on the very spot where I meant to eat my lunch. What's he doing, I wonder? Why, he's—yes, he's actually painting! I wonder if I dare go past. He doesn't look so very dreadful—I do believe he's almost clean. I'll go! (*Stands up, but sits down again with decision.*) No. I might catch sight of his picture!

Yet perhaps it's worth the torture. I must have a swain or two in my book, and he's much more wholesome-looking than Bill who drove me from the station. Besides, this may be a find. "The Ploughman Painter"!—Burns with a brush. Perhaps he has Talent, and is patiently waiting to be discovered. I'll risk it. But I mustn't pounce on him without warning. How would it be to cough? I expect they don't have coughs, though, in this uncivilised place. A song? a country ditty? That's it. I must begin warbling some innocent lay as though I haven't seen him. Let me see. "Che faro senz' Euridice"? No. That's for an even worse place than Popplewold. Something rustic and primitive. I have it! The Shepherd-boy's Song in *Tannhäuser*! (*Seated with her back to Phipleigh, she begins to sing in English.*)

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PHIPLEIGH (*dropping his brush*):—Who on earth's that? Hallo, it's a little cottage girl. Not a bad figure, either—though of course I shall see a face like a full moon or a grandfather's clock when she turns round. But what's she singing? It isn't—yes, by Jove, it's actually Wagner—*Tannhäuser*—and in Popplewold!

Heard it at a Penny Reading, I expect. Vicar's daughter's town friend sang it in the Parish Room. Curate played the piano, and all that sort of thing. Better let her know I'm here, though. I'll whistle something—the accompaniment 'll do—that bright little bit the shepherd plays on his pipe.

MARY:—I wonder if he's looking yet. (Phipleigh *begins to whistle. She starts in surprise.*) Why, he's putting in the accompaniment! No. The thing's absurd. It's a mere coincidence. I suppose they can only play about one thing on a shepherd's pipe, and Wagner's borrowed it, like that little bit in *Parsifal*. Still, now he's whistling I can turn round.

PHIPLEIGH (*to himself, as she turns her head*):—Good Heavens—she's a beauty, a beauty! Mary Cowley, you have a rival. She hasn't two ideas in her head, of course; but a head like that can do without ideas. And, by Jove, it's the very head I want. I might have searched a lifetime without finding such another. Why, the girl's almost an exact visibility of my ideal Mary Cowley—what Mary Cowley would be like if she condescended to a print gown and a sunbonnet. Here she is in the nick of time. She shall sit to me if it costs me fifty

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pounds. A little idealising—a little intellectualising of the face . . .

But how to manage it? Pooh! In these out-of-the-way villages ceremony's off. I offer to help her over the stile; carry her basket; say something about the crops. So here goes. (*He moves towards the stile.*)

MARY (*slightly fluttered*):—He's coming—he's going to speak! Well, what if he does? A country girl must not snub a country lad. Please, Father *Touchstone*, am I not a sweet, dutiful little maid?

FRANK (*holding his hat in his hand*):—Good-morning. It's splendid weather for— (*To himself.*) Confound it all! What *is* it splendid weather for? Asparagus—corn—beetroot—and aren't there some things called wurzels?—and some things called mangels? Good. That'll do. Sounds rustic. Hang it, though. Perhaps the weather isn't splendid for them. I'll ask her what *she* thinks. (*Aloud.*) How do you think the mangels are getting on?

MARY (*to herself, mystified*):—Mangles, mangles? Oh, the man takes me for a new laundrymaid from the Hall. Impudence! Still, to him it's an exalted position. He means it for a compliment—shows a polite interest in my affairs. (*Aloud.*) Oh, very nicely, thank you, if they're kept well oiled.

FRANK (*aside*):—Thought it was watered. Better change the subject. (*Aloud.*) Er—may I not help you down?

MARY (*aside*):—Quite knightly! Those horrid Board

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Schools must do some good after all. And his grammar! I'd better let him help me down, or he'll be asking something about starch. (*To Phipleigh.*) Thank you very much. (*She hands him the basket, takes his hand, and leaps very gracefully to the ground.*)

FRANK (*aside*):—I no longer begrudge that eight-and-fourpence. A hundred miles from town—and she's worth walking every inch of it barefoot. Why, I'm not sure if she'll want much idealising after all.

MARY (*rather coldly, disengaging her hand*):—Please—my basket.

FRANK (*aside*):—Not yet, my beauty. You don't go yet. (*To Mary.*) Certainly not. It's heavy for you. I shall carry it.

MARY:—Oh no, no! It's ever so light. Give it me, please.

FRANK (*aside*):—Poor little girl! Mother will scold and William 'Ennery will be jealous if I walk her to the cottage door. She must be comforted. (*To Mary.*) Half-way, then?

MARY (*aside*):—Poor fellow—it would be a shame to repel his homely kindness. Besides, he's a swain to be studied. I'll let him walk with me till I'm bored, and then it'll be half-way, of course. What a sublime transition, though! Instead of a morning spent in spiritual communion with my ideal Frank Phipleigh, I'm to "keep company" with Tummas the ploughman.

FRANK (*aside*):—She doesn't say No! It ought to have been sixteen-and-eightpence. The Railway

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Company has grossly undercharged me. Ten minutes and I'll find out all about her, from her grandfather's rheumatics to her Aunt Jane's pigs. It must be splendjd weather for rheumatics if they're kept well oiled. (*To Mary.*) Just half-way.

MARY (*aside*):—Your blessing, Father *Touchstone* No doubt this is a short cut to Nature's heart! (*They go off together.*)

Act ii

Scene:—*The same, an hour later.* Mary Cowley and Frank Phippleigh (*still carrying the basket*) come sauntering from the Back Centre, between the hay-cocks.

MARY:—Why, we are back where we started from!

FRANK:—So we are! (*Aside.*) I thought we were three miles away, and my picture tossed by a bull into the nearest pond long before this. Very cunningly managed, my beauty,—including this pretended astonishment! She doesn't want me to see where she lives, or where she was going. And how strangely she fences my questions! (*More seriously.*) You shan't give me the slip, though, little cottage girl.

MARY (*aside*):—He's cool. All the same, it was very clever of him. And really I'm rather relieved to find we weren't half-way back to London. Because, just for this morning, I prefer Popplewold. (*The village clock*

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strikes twelve.) Why, we've been walking more than an hour, and it's only seemed twenty minutes! (*Aloud.*) Now, please! my basket.

FRANK:—But we're not half-way yet.

MARY:—Oh, we are. We've come all the way.

FRANK:—And now we start round again!

MARY:—No, no! Please—the basket.

FRANK:—Please—the bargain! Half-way!

MARY (*to herself*):—He doesn't want to leave me—and I'm not sure I do either. I wonder . . . (*Suddenly, to Phippleigh.*) But half-way is such a little way it isn't worth while. I'm only going to have my lunch under that tree.

FRANK (*aside*):—Her lunch? Could I . . . ? No, it would be too . . . Yes! Country girls like you to be at home with them. She'd think it quite stiff if I didn't. (*Aloud.*) Under that tree? How strange! That's just where I was going to have mine. (*A pause. Mary says nothing.*) But of course I can go and sit under that other one—(*He looks at her, but she does not speak*)—if you like.

MARY (*aside*):—I ought to send him off, but . . . Somehow this man seems to take my will away. Ten times while we were walking, I tried to raise my hand for my basket, and my voice to turn him back, but every time I felt—well, as I am feeling now.

FRANK:—If you tell me to.

MARY:—To evict you would be too bad. I will go to the other tree.

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FRANK:—No, certainly you shall not. It's frightfully damp, and swarming with— (*To himself.*) Confound it! What do these places swarm with? (*Aloud.*) —with bats, and cockchafers, and water-rats.

MARY:—How horrible! I shouldn't think of letting you go among such dreadful creatures. There'll be room for us both. (*To herself, as they move towards the tree.*) Yet it's awfully selfish of me. How uncomfortable the poor fellow will feel! No doubt he has some brown bread and cold bacon and cheese in a spotted handkerchief, and some beer in a black bottle.

FRANK (*aside*):—My boy! Give us your hand! That was well done. All the same the poor little maid will be dreadfully ill at ease. I expect she's brought some thick bread-and-butter, and a hard-boiled egg, and a jam turnover, and a bottleful of buttermilk. Wonder whether a wing from that fowl would hurt her feelings! (*Placing the basket on the grass and moving away.*) I feel as if I'm going to banquet with a princess. She's more, she's a queen! (*Thoughtfully.*) Every time she spoke, as we wandered through the fields, her mind caught up to her beauty; and every time she was silent, her beauty flashed ahead with a fresh lead. If we had not worked round to the same spot again, I could have wandered on with her for ever, anywhere. She seemed to hold me in a kind of spell . . . But hallo, Frank Phippleigh, this won't do. You've come to Popplewold to paint bad pictures, not to fall in love with village beauties. And no treason to Mary Cowley!

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MARY (*taking a plate, glass, etc., from the basket, and placing them on a snowy cloth, along with half a chicken*):—

Now a few flowers. (*She arranges a few on the cloth.*) Yesterday, when I lunched here alone, I indulged a foolish day-dream of Frank Phippleigh sitting beside me on this very spot. Could it have been some strange presentiment of to-day's experience? For, except for his ploughman's garb, and his rustic burliness and health, this Popplewolder might be the very man I dreamed of. His eyes, his way of speaking, the way he looks at me . . . (*Dreamily.*) One difference, though. The Frank Phippleigh of my dream spoke passionate and beautiful words of love. He kneeled to me. He . . . What nonsense! There should be more flowers! (*She goes to pluck them, as Frank returns with a luncheon-basket.*)

FRANK:—Good heavens! What next? Where's the Dry Monopole and the Neapolitan ices? She's some wealthy farmer's daughter! No. No farmer has any money nowadays. Besides, she'd be dressed-up tremendously—farmers' daughters always are, now the farmers have no money. She's the Vicar's daughter—or the Squire's. But she's coming. (*He unpacks a chicken and a bottle of claret.*)

MARY (*returning with flowers*):—He'll smack his lips odiously. What! a luncheon-basket—in Popplewold—and a bottle of wine, and a chicken! Think of him being able to afford a chicken all this way from town! Agricultural depression! You'd say he was some opulent young squire—but his dress. Besides, he told me

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how little time at his easel he could spare from holding the ploughshare. But a luncheon-basket—and a chicken! It must be Free Trade. Don't they say that a Victorian peasant has more luxuries than a Tudor king? But he's waiting. (*She sits down. Frank does the same.*)

FRANK (*aside*):—Near Nature's Heart—and all for eight-and-fourpence!

MARY (*aloud*):—How curious we both have chicken!

FRANK:—Isn't it? But you've no wine. How lucky I brought a whole bottle by mistake! Allow me. (*He fills her glass, then his own. They attack the chickens in silence.*)

MARY (*to herself*):—He doesn't smack his lips at all. I felt at once he had the instincts of a gentleman, but he has the *technique* as well. And what an unconventional *technique*, and yet so easy and charming! That odd thought keeps coming back, too, that he's the image of Frank Phipleigh—I mean, of what Frank Phipleigh ought to be. His mind, though—I have not probed it to the bottom yet.

FRANK (*aloud*):—How much sweeter is this simple meal, in the pleasant fields, under the ample sky, than the banquets of the rich in crowded cities which we read about! (*To himself.*) That ought to do—especially if she's the Vicar's daughter.

MARY:—Do you think so?

FRANK (*surprised*):—Well—yes, certainly, just at this moment.

MARY (*aside*):—Frank Phipleigh! No doubt you're

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working miracles with that brush of yours in your studio a hundred miles away: but could you have said that? (*Aloud, ignoring the compliment.*) But at other moments? You always feel Nature is enough, Nature is best?

FRANK (*aside*):—Mustn't forget I'm supposed to be a rustic bred and born. What's she at, I wonder? (*Aloud.*) Don't *you*?

MARY:—No.

FRANK:—No?

MARY:—No. I'm sick of Nature.

FRANK (*with growing surprise and interest*):—Sick of Nature?

MARY:—Yes. It's badly planned and still worse executed. So many of the bigs are too big or not half big enough—and it's the same with the littles. (*Aside.*) Now, have I shocked or only puzzled him?

FRANK (*aside, with great respect*):—Little village girl, I said you hadn't two ideas in your head. You've one—and it's the only one I much care about. (*As if amazed, still to himself.*) Why, in a dozen easy words you've said all Mary Cowley says in that last great *Swanson* of hers. Mary Cowley! I'm fast falling from my allegiance. You see, this country maid has all your brains—and I'm not certain you haven't got red hair. (*Aloud.*) Might not one go further? As I follow the plough when the sun is setting, thinking out the picture I will set upon when my work is done, I want more than things bigger or smaller. I want many things that

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are there left out—and many things not there put in—and something over and above *things* as well.

MARY (*aside, astonished*):—Frank Phippleigh, your throne is tottering. Your hand no doubt is more cunning than this ploughman's, but his creed is not less worthy than your own—*my* own. (*Aloud.*) You would say then that Nature is lower than Art—that the Actual is less precious than the Ideal Beauty?

FRANK:—Exactly. (*To himself.*) And invariably, too, I should have said an hour ago. Yet when I compare this actual girl, eating actual chicken, and sipping my Chateau Larose so daintily, with my ideal of Mary Cowley—this actual, wonderful, beautiful girl— (*Aloud.*) That is—generally.

MARY (*disappointed*):—Only generally? What's true once is true always.

FRANK (*slowly*):—I used to think so.

MARY (*warming to a favourite point*):—Then think so again. True Art realises Ideal Beauty. Taking up whatever is most beautiful in Nature, Art makes it more beautiful still. Art purges it of all that is ugly and out of place. Art brings in whatever will make it up to Perfection and fill it full of Ideal Beauty. When Nature has soared her highest, and her wings are weary, then Art springs like the little bird from the eagle's shoulder and mounts still nearer to the sun. Think so again!

FRANK (*who has watched Mary's growing fervour as one entranced, speaking to himself, earnestly*):—Oh, she is glorious, all glorious—and all wrong! Nature! What

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Art could paint this lily? What could be taken away, what could be added to make her more glorious and more beautiful? (*Aloud.*) I used to think so.

MARY (*aside*):—Rustic reiteration! No, no—I should have ceased an hour ago to pronounce "rustic" with this arrogant disdain. Rustic though he be, his soul's eyes see as far as mine. These repetitions have their meaning. Is he preparing another compliment? He's grown too serious for that. Is it . . . does he mean . . . ? Absurd! (*After a pause.*) And yet—he might. He's read of the towns—only read of them, I suppose. Popplewold has been his world. Perhaps I am the first to understand him and to sympathise. Only an hour—an hour and a half, perhaps. But a first talk with someone above a dairymaid . . . (*After a short silence, still to herself.*) Frank Phipleigh, you are dethroned! Had we met, what more could you have said for Art than my ploughman here? Most likely, too, you are taciturn and joyless—and I can't be sure about your nose. But my ploughman here—can the *Touchstone* after all be right? Most of Nature's work is crude and poor—just as most books and pictures are crude and poor. But can it be that in some finest, rarest mood Nature outstrips us all? After all, when I say my Art realises the Ideal, I mean only *my* Ideal. My Art stops short at the best I can imagine or desire. And my ideal Frank Phipleigh—the man I imagined and desired—the figure I crowned in my fancy and garbed with every manly grace—the highest creation of my Art . . . Well, here is my

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ploughman, Nature's work—here in simple strength, and easy knightliness, and modest greatness. *Touchstone*, you were right. Popplewold has taught me its lesson. I needed to get nearer Nature's heart. (*Abruptly to Phipleigh.*) And why do you not think so now?

FRANK:—Experience—

MARY:—Has taught you what?

FRANK:—That there are some things—some beings—they're Nature, I suppose—so beautiful, so perfect, so pure, that Art's fairest imaginings fall far behind.

MARY (*to herself, agitated*):—Some things—some beings—oh, what wonderful new feeling is this which lays hold of me, like the spell of his voice as we came through the meadows? New? No—not new. In my foolish day-dreams I seemed to know that these would be my feelings if Frank Phipleigh, radiant in all the perfections I had robed him with, came as my fairy prince. I feel—I feel—oh, this ploughman's spell!—I feel as if an old dream were sweetly coming true. Some—*beings!* *One being!* Beautiful, perfect, pure. He has begun to love . . . (*Pulling herself up sharply.*) Mary Cowley, are you a silly, sentimental little schoolgirl? If this ploughman's in love, be sure it's with some bouncing, wholesome farm-lass, not with a bundle of conceit and affectations like you! (*She tries to dissemble her seriousness and to address Phipleigh banteringly.*) An experience? How interesting! Tell me about her.

FRANK (*aside*):—Am I a thundering fool—or do I

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for the first time find my better senses? Until to-day, under this Popplewold tree, have I ever believed that love was more than a literary affectation? There were those dreams of Mary Cowley—but they were affectation too! Yet an hour of this village maiden—her face, her words, her eyes, her voice—the soul of her . . . (*With decision.*) No, I'm not a fool. And God can stare me through and through and find no dishonour in me. My heart is this country girl's, even if I never see her more. Mary Cowley! The Queen is dead—long live the Queen! (*Aloud.*) About whom?

MARY:—Your experience. Where does she live?

FRANK (*aside, earnestly*):—God knows I mean no wrong. (*To Mary, without any feint or fence.*) In Popplewold.

MARY (*to herself, deeply disappointed*):—In Popplewold! He knows I do not live in Popplewold—or why should I not have known my way through the meadows? He knows all the villagers, too. He must guess I am a stranger here. I knew it would be so—some brainless, soulless, strapping, red-cheeked village belle, who'll keep him here and keep him down. (*To Phippleigh, with a poor attempt to sustain the tone of banter.*) She was beautiful, you said. Is she very beautiful?

FRANK:—I said Art's fairest imaginings were not fit to be her handmaids.

MARY (*aside, a little bitterly*):—The Three Graces in one, no doubt. (*Aloud.*) And perfect, you said—she's perfect too. I suppose her mind—

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FRANK:—It is the rarest. An artist's mind, a poet's mind.

MARY (*aside*):—The Three Graces—and the Nine Muses also. (*Aloud.*) And pure. Her soul—

FRANK:—Is most beautiful of all.

MARY (*aside*):—And the whole Communion of Saints!

FRANK (*continuing, earnestly*):—And it suffuses all her wondrous looks and speech as fragrance does a pure water-lily.

MARY (*aside*):—A water-lily—my water-lilies! She might have left me those. (*Rising and turning away in sudden sadness.*) Oh, *Touchstone, Touchstone*, I've drawn too near to Nature's heart! Popplewold—these are too many lessons for one little hour—you've humbled me too bitterly and too soon! To learn that outside books and my thoughts there is such love—and that it is not for me! To find outside my day-dreams a man nobler than them all—and not for me! Never again can my love, frozen asleep till now, go out as it has rushed to-day to this peasant stranger. I am blinded by the blazings of new suns, I am chilled by the glooms of new eclipses. Yes, *Touchstone*! I'm too near Nature's heart! (*Frank has also risen, and has watched her agitation with intense eagerness. She turns to him imperiously, and speaks.*) Then be sure you love her all you ought!

FRANK (*falling at her feet*):—Be sure I'll love her all I may! (*A very long pause.*)

MARY (*dazed*):—My water-lilies . . . they have not

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taken away my water-lilies. (*She frees her hand. Frank moves a few yards off, sadly.*)

MARY:—That heart will love me all it may! (*She slowly collects her thoughts.*) Yet—a ploughman's bride—threescore years and ten of Popplewold! But no, that need not be. His Art will win its way, and till his day comes every penny I have is his. (*A new thought strikes her.*) But oh, this hideous voice of worldly prudence! My bearing, my speech—he must have guessed I am no country lass. How do I know his sudden devotion is to me, just me, and not to birth or gold? A simple test—and then my life takes up the gauntlet of my verse, and my ploughman wears this water-lily!

FRANK:—She casts me off with scorn! The labourer has asked the Vicar's daughter, perhaps the Squire's, to be his sweetheart! She spurns me. But back I'll go and tell her of my wealth and fame. To her equal she'll feel more free to give her love. Yet no—it shall be No or Yes for love and love alone. She spoke of water-lilies. (*He turns and seizes her hand again.*) Water-lily! To seek to pluck you is presumption indeed. You shrink from the labourer's rough hand. But choose, water-lily. Will you bloom sweetly in an earthen bowl filled daily from the springs of love, or will you wither in a vase of thirsty gold? Choose, water-lily?

MARY (*aside*):—It is scarcely a falsehood—I am forced to prove him. (*To Frank.*) You cannot mean it—you must not. Shake off this sudden foolish fancy.

The Dome

Your future calls you. You will be famous in the great city—and then you'll regret you tied yourself to a peasant's daughter, a poor cottage girl. (*Misreading Frank's surprise, she exclaims bitterly.*) Let go my hand.

FRANK:—No, water-lily, no, not yet. To obey you were to disobey. You bade me love you all I ought.

MARY:—And you said you'd love me only all you may. You may not—not at all. Let go my hand.

FRANK (*to himself, in deepest sadness*):—It's as I feared. She loves some village fellow not fit to behold her face. She is his—and I may not love her. (*To Mary, with gentle dignity, slowly letting go her hand.*) I did not think of that; or I should not have held your hand. I crave your pardon—and *his* pardon too.

MARY (*quickly and warmly*):—No, no! Not that. No one but you has ever . . .

FRANK (*seizing her hand again in rapture*):—My water-lily, altogether lovely, altogether pure! God made you all for me. God has kept you all for me.

MARY (*to herself, as in a dream*):—Now am I near Love's heart.

FRANK:—No one has ever held your hand? No one has trodden your heart's pathways?

MARY:—God has made me all for you. God has kept me all for you. No one but you has held my hand. No one but you has trodden the pathways of my heart—except—except a foolish day-dream—someone I have never seen. His name and mine were linked once,

Near Nature's Heart

in a paper, and I—I dreamed some foolish dreams. But I am awake now. And you—your hand—your heart?

FRANK (*solemnly, with steady gaze*):—God made me all for you—and He has kept me all for you. Nothing have I to confess save a foolish dream like yours. When you sang on the stile this morning, I was painting an ideal portrait of a woman I have never met. She—

MARY:—It is there?

FRANK:—Yes, there. (*Mary runs to look. Frank stands for a moment thinking, then speaks slowly to himself.*) Her name—and his name—linked—in a paper . . . She was May-Queen perhaps, and . . . (*His eye falls on the basket and on the "Touchstone."* He seizes it with a ringing shout. At the same moment, with a cry of amazement, Mary reads the title of the picture. They face each other suddenly and call out together.)

MARY (*pointing to the picture*):—Mary Cowley!

FRANK (*waving the paper*):—Frank Phippleigh!
(*They spring forward, and gaze at one another in radiant silence.*)

FRANK:—Mary Cowley!

MARY:—Frank Phippleigh! (*They meet, and he takes both her hands. A long pause. At last Frank steps back a little and devours her with his eyes.*)

FRANK:—Oh, Mary Cowley, Mary Cowley, Mary Cowley—then you're not Nature after all?

MARY:—Then am I Art?

FRANK (*laughing*):—I mustn't say that.

The Dome

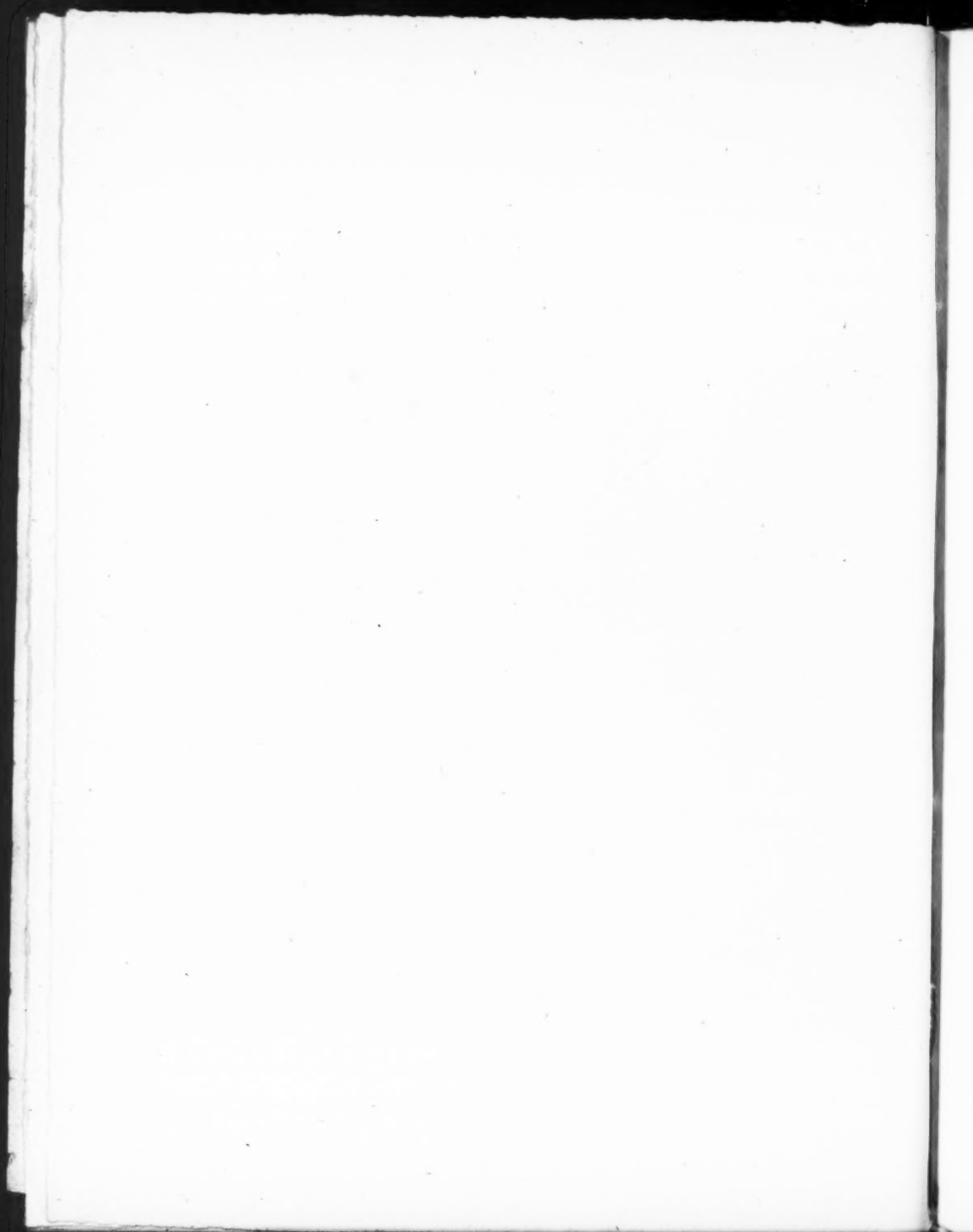
MARY:—What am I, then?

FRANK:—Yes—what are you, then?

MARY:—I think I must be—(*leaving her two hands in Frank's, she turns away her head and speaks very softly*)—your water-lily!

J. E. Woodmeald.

Drawing, Painting and
Engraving

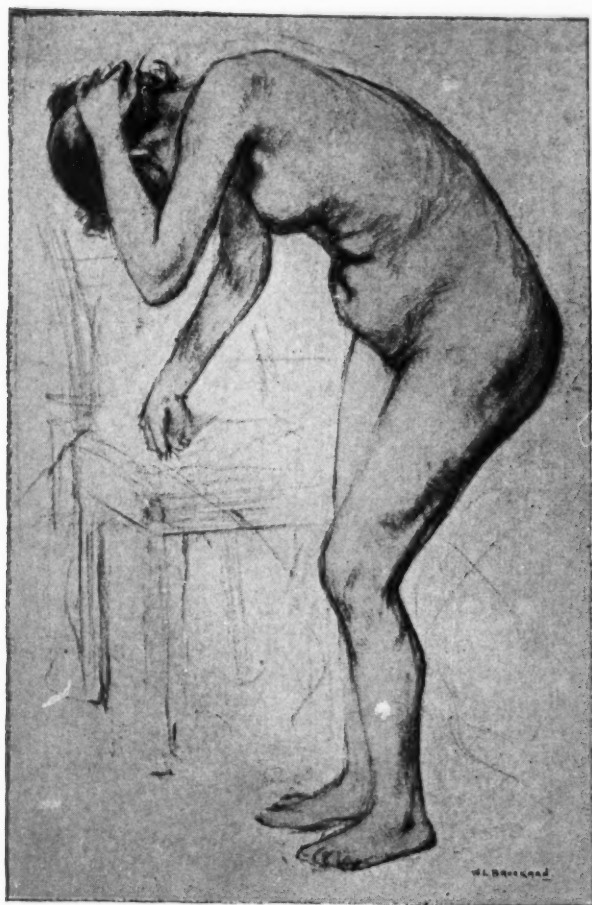




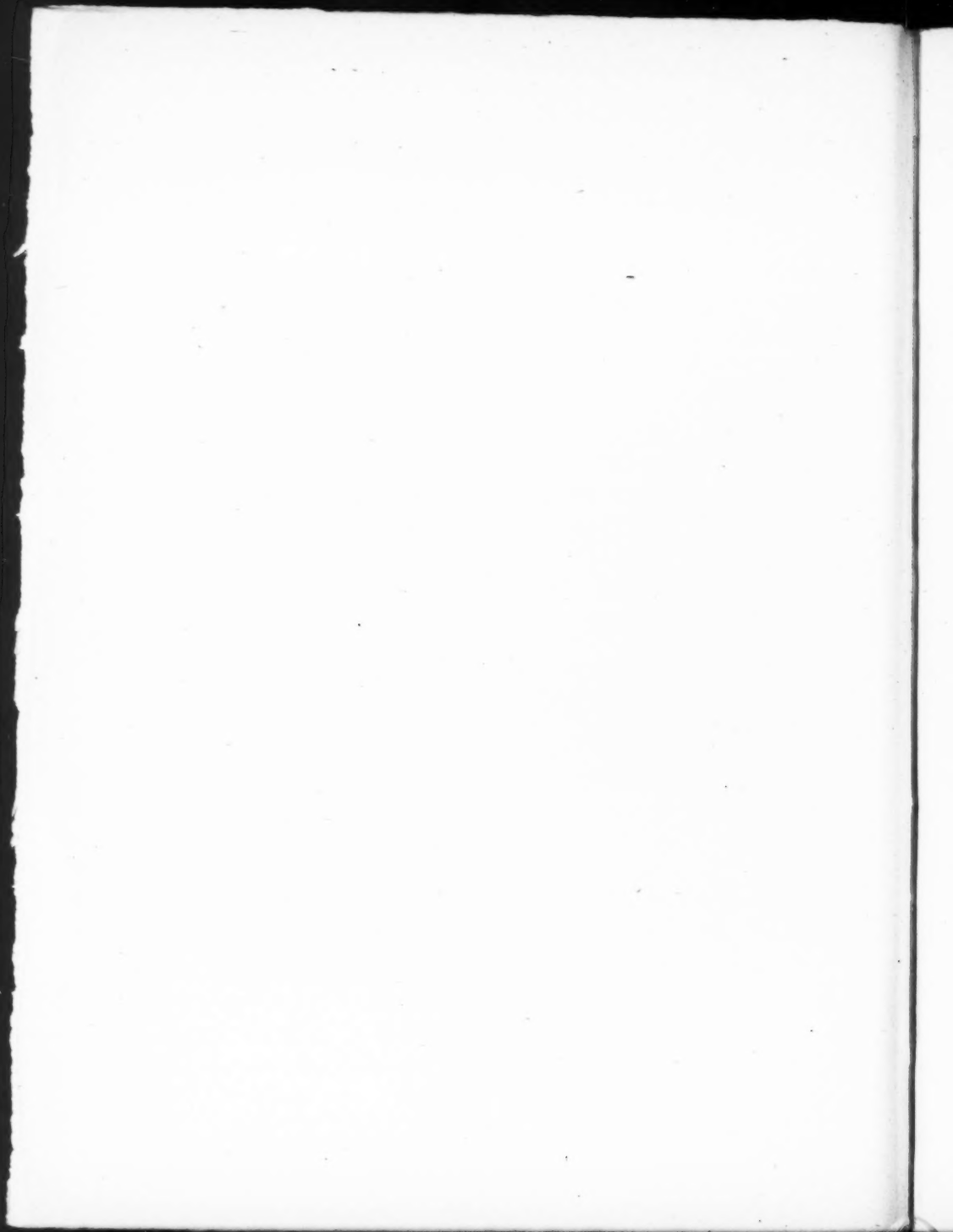
J. H. Smith, Sc.

Cattle Grazing.

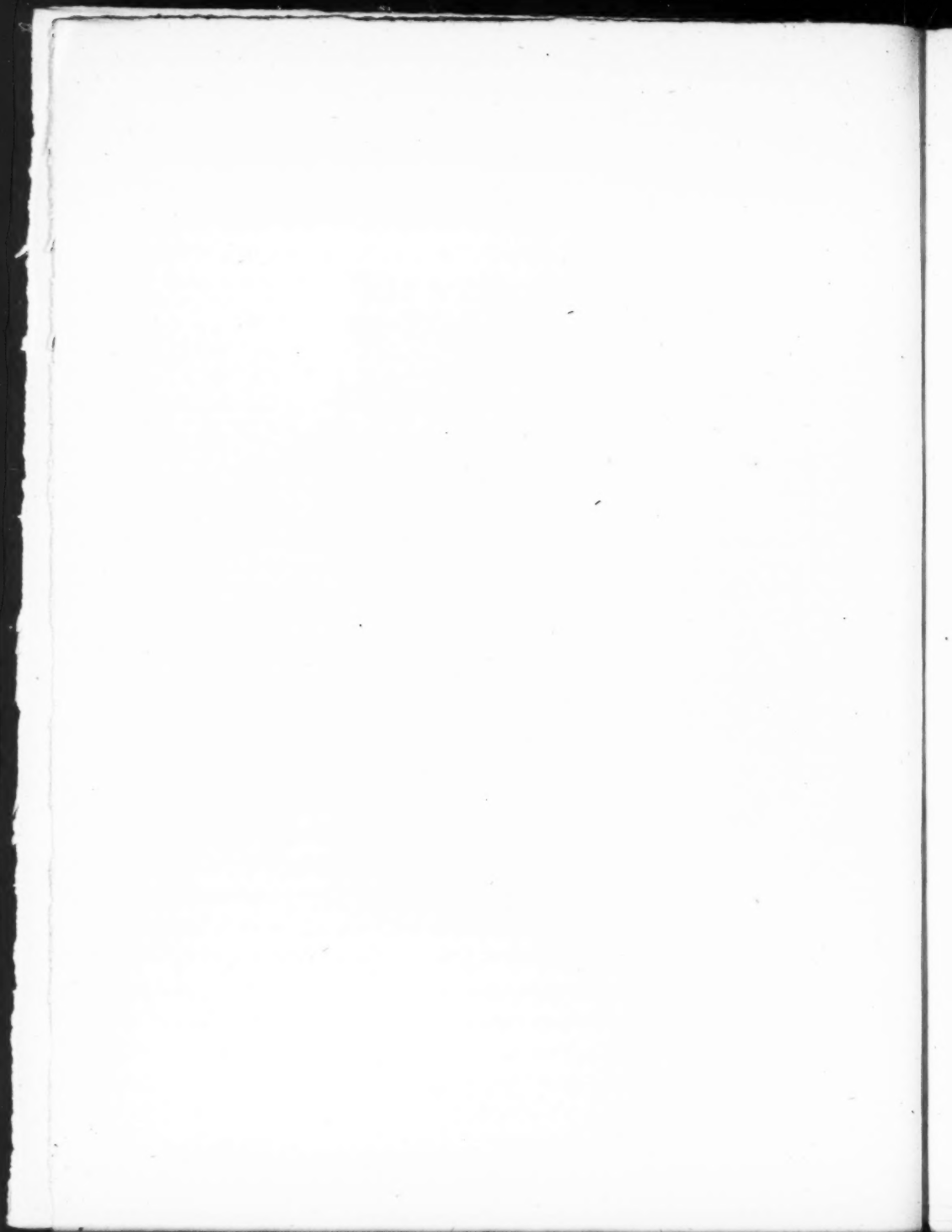
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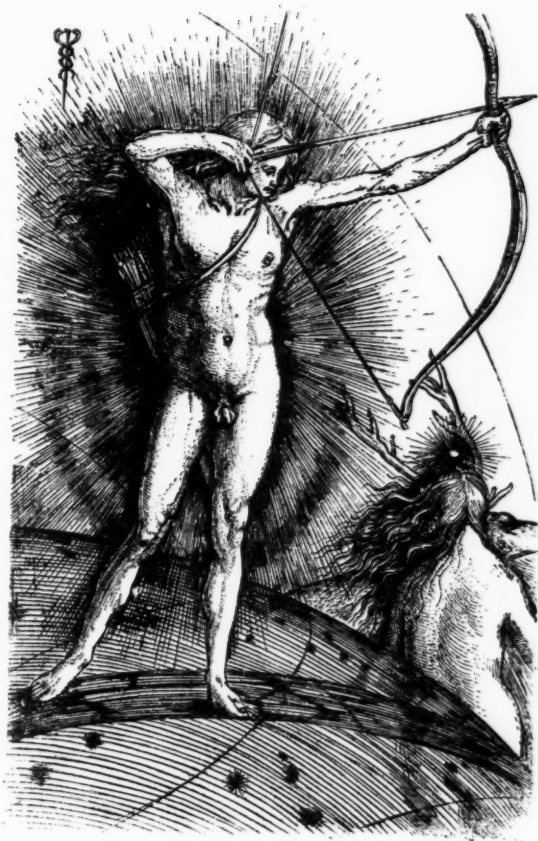


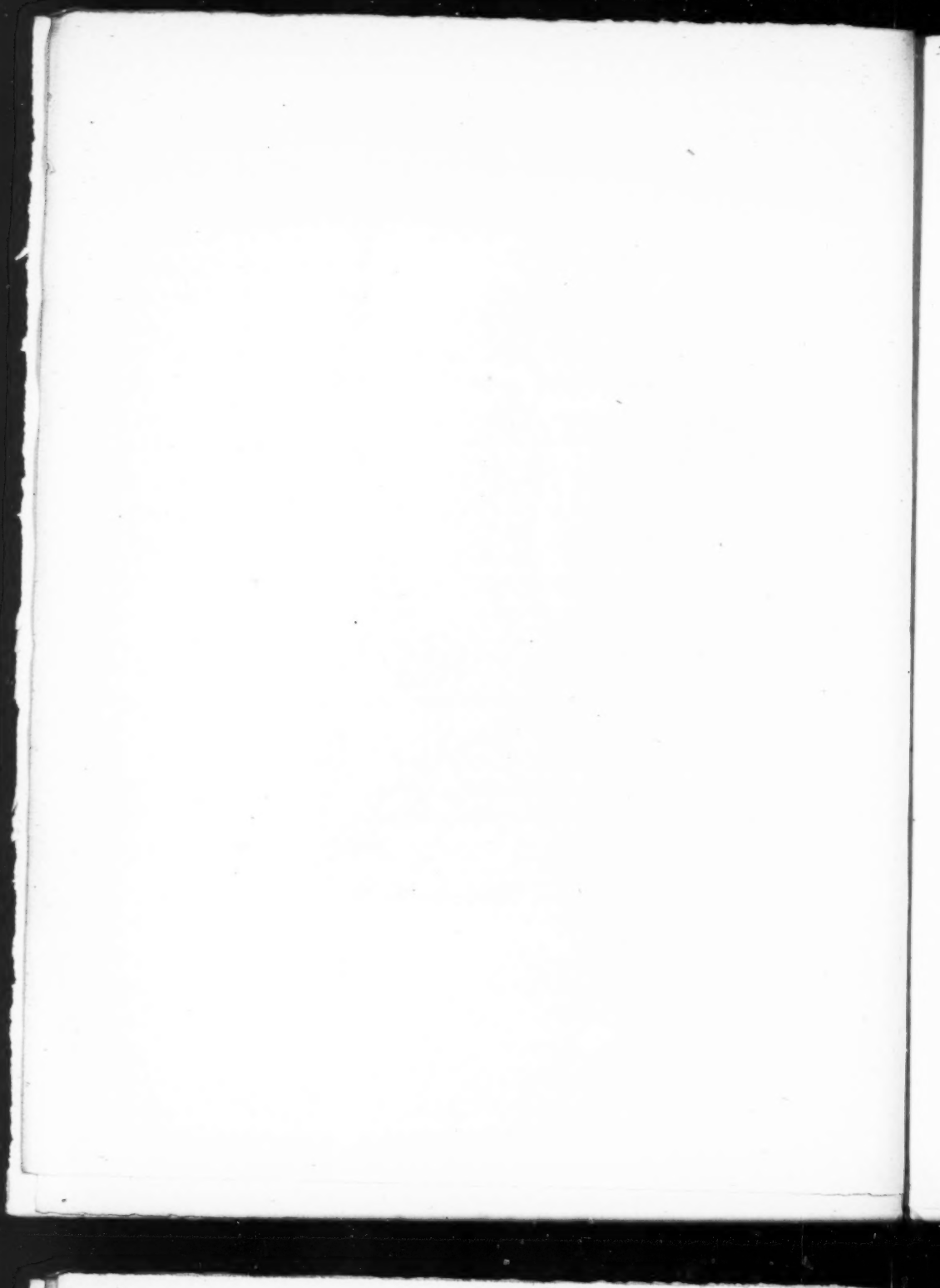












Three Engravings of the Early Renaissance

The three prints here reproduced are typical examples of the first perfection of the art of engraving at the close of the fifteenth century.

That art was born in Germany, and for many reasons flourished there far more than in the South. The German method of engraving, one sees in this little Annunciation, is technically more advanced, and more truly an engraver's method, than the Italian. Mantegna ploughs the copper with resolute strong lines, exactly as he would make a drawing with pen upon paper : he takes no pains to procure from the copper the lovely quality of line in which an impression from it excels all pen-work. This, Schongauer could do with a skill that surpassed all his predecessors, a skill which Dürer himself scarcely surpassed.

The fame of Dürer has too much obscured Schongauer's glory. If he has not all Dürer's force, and little of his pregnant and impressive invention, he has more charm ; and he has power as well as sweetness. Born at the middle of the fifteenth century, he died in his prime,

The Dome

in 1491. The full strength of the Renaissance did not reach him. But he felt its first approach. He inherited the old mediæval traditions, but he touched them with fresh life ; and his beautiful creations have an air of youth and morning about them, which later artists missed. The brooding, serious thought with which Dürer's themes are charged, bred of the perplexities of a time of intellectual change, is absent from Schongauer. He has his seriousness also, but it is the sweet seriousness of a child.

In this Annunciation is reflected that charming serenity. The Virgin hears the divine message with tranquil pride, accepts her wonderful destiny without misgiving: not as to Botticelli she appeared, a woman overcome with the scarcely supportable glory conferred upon her womanhood, shaken by the Angel's voice, disturbed, with deprecating hands. Botticelli's Angel kneels in awe, oppressed with the magnitude of his tidings: in the Angel of Schongauer there is only the joy of a joyful messenger. It is worth remarking, too, with what delight Schongauer, while going straight to the essence of his subject, has portrayed his chosen accessories—the lily, the folds of the curtain, the disordered carpet.

A spirit of far different aspect confronts us in the great Mantegna. A profound scholar in his art, devoted to the study of the antique, the rediscovered remains of which were newly dazzling the world, Mantegna did not, like so many artists since, follow that ideal to his ruin. His vitality was too powerful. Like Landor in litera-

Three Engravings of Early Renaissance

ture, he is never more vigorously himself than when most submitting to the ancients. And as with the strongest temperaments, as with Michelangelo, there is in him, behind that almost savage excess of strength, a tenderness, a sweetness more than that of natures habitually sweet and tender.

In this Descent into Hades, greatly reduced in the accompanying reproduction, Mantegna has taken one of the most favourite subjects of the Middle Ages, the theme of illuminations in hundreds of manuscripts; one, therefore, of which there was a traditional representation. It is characteristic of him that he has kept close to this tradition; yet how intensely original is the result! A lesser mind would have sought effect by suggestions of indefinite vastness and gloom. Mantegna, daring in simplicity, represents, with no heightened play of light and shadow, an actual gate in rugged rock; the warders of hell, monstrous creatures, blow their horns in dismay, just as in the old manuscripts; and the newly delivered dead stand by amazed. He disdains all new invention; but by the intensity of his imagination, expressed in impassioned strokes, makes the strange scene vehemently alive. Our ears are deafened by the horns, yet we feel also the majestic silence with which Christ stoops into the gloom to raise that dim figure within.

Through all North Italy, Mantegna's influence was masterfully felt. Jacopo de' Barbari, the artist of our third engraving, did not escape it. Born in Venice, and working in Germany, he is especially interesting as

The Dome

interpreting the confluence and interaction of the spirits of the North and South. From him Dürer learnt something of his knowledge of proportion, and adapted this very print of Apollo and Diana in an engraving of his own.

Laurence Binyon.







Sandro Botticelli (Filipepi)

How recently Botticelli became known to English people, may be gathered from the fact that the index to Mr. Ruskin's *Modern Painters* contains not even a bare mention of his name. But if the five volumes published between 1843 and 1860 are silent respecting Botticelli, the *Ariadne Florentina*, published in 1872, contains a glowing eulogy that may help to explain why a painter so long ignored became suddenly one of the idols of dilettanti; although even to this day his designs for illustration, which were the immediate subject of Mr. Ruskin's appreciation, are familiar to a comparative few. Many causes have helped to re-edify the fame of Botticelli. From Vasari's gossiping chronicle to Ulmar's elaborate monograph, we have plenty of authorised information to-day; and Mr. Herbert Horne's big monograph is to add soon still more valuable evidence concerning the artist. As regards the wider public, Ruskin's frequent references in his later works and Mrs. Cimabue Brown's misplaced rhapsodies in *Punch*, set so many folks babbling his name, that the danger was lest the real painter should be for-

The Dome

gotten and an æsthetic dummy erected in his place for the vulgar to adore.

Things are changed, fortunately, and just at the moment it requires almost as much courage to avow a liking for Botticelli as for Browning; when the world at large ridiculed both, it was a proof of Culture to proclaim yourself of the minority. Now, when the "Primavera" is in most drawing-rooms of the suburbs; when the last Arts and Crafts showed an artist of William Morris's standing allowing it to be burlesqued (with the best intention, no doubt) in Arras tapestry; when reproductions by all sorts of processes, from chromolithography to the meanest half-tone, are scattered everywhere, it is easier to smile at the craze, and convey an idea that an undue fondness for Botticelli denotes a lack of sympathy for real master-work. Yet he is great enough to survive even the fulsome adoration of fanatics. But to believe that he stands alone as representative of the wondrous movement it is convenient to call the Italian Renaissance, is to confess that labels are more important than specimens. Besides, in this case the label is not particularly accurate. Yet with a full recognition of all that revival of "the newly recovered scholastic learning" implies, you do but appreciate more highly the exquisite beauty of his work. This would be impossible to one careless of that reawakening to Pagan lore, the strange tumult of thought and imagination which stirred in the veins of Botticelli and his fellows, and, like the rush of new sap after winter, woke them to new vitality.

Sandro Botticelli

The classic legends Botticelli received "as a child in later years recovers the forgotten dearness of a nursery tale"—a sentence for which one forgives Mr. Ruskin more than needs forgiveness. This reveals the very essence of the man whose art is "absolutely pure Etruscan, merely changing its subjects, and representing the Virgin instead of Athena, and Christ instead of Jupiter." He caught the legend of spring as it appealed to the classic world, and re-pictured it in the garb of Florentines. True that the secret of re-capturing the eternal youth of Art is not his alone; the well-beloved Lucca della Robbia in his Majolica, or the equally well-beloved Robert Louis Stevenson in his *Child's Garden of Verses*, go to prove that at all times an artist with the soul of a little child can re-state the legends of the past, or of his own infancy, with all their native freshness. It is not that Botticelli painted children and angels as children, or that Lucca della Robbia caught the grace of babyhood; it is the simple frankness of the innocence of all ages that infuses their work with limpid sweetness. Botticelli, with the new-born delight in learning, found the current faith of his time able to express his ideal, no less readily even if at times he prefers to depict Venus rising from the Sea, or some Pagan myth, in place of incidents drawn from his native hagiology. He was himself typical of the Renaissance, the Resurrection—whether you take it as the procession of the seasons, the new faith built out of the ruins of the old, or Life upspringing from Death. For Art is always concerned

The Dome

with its primal theme of eternal youth. A master once again imparts new youthfulness to his art, which his followers imitate until the manner becomes old and decadent.

To feel respect for the simplicity of the youth of creeds and methods is a secret that the money-grabbing majority despise, and at the same time the one verity that binds together theologians and dilettanti, men of culture and men of none. Even in science some such belief in renewed energy is the central idea—whether you call it the life and death of worlds—the survival of the fittest—the triumph of right-going over wrong-going—the Good which is the final end of it—all are merely dogmatic phrases striving to express truths which each spring sees made visible in natural facts.

To bring the experience of age to expound the fantasies of childhood is not agreeable to the average person, who loves to swathe himself in superiority, to despise not only his own chrysalis stage, but the beginnings of any art or of any movement. The wiser man proclaims as his chief truth the inferiority of the moment compared with the supreme moments of the past; and in following his way the artist also unconsciously reverts to first principles, adds one more new spring to join the record of the springtimes of dead centuries which still delight us in their Art. Therefore, although ultra-superior persons declare proudly that they have out-grown Botticelli, and risk their usually choice derangement of "epitaphs" by quoting some simple gibe at the

Sandro Botticelli

"cock-eyed Primitive," we need not be depressed. To many quite sane people, weary and bored with the fashions and problems of the hour, his pictures are still restful and lovable. If you chance to feel unsympathetic towards him, even then it were wiser not to criticise his drawing, nor to attack or defend his brush-work. He is a master,—that is indisputable,—and meaner folk may not be permitted to cavil at methods which satisfied their creator.

As the Sermon on the Mount, considered an unimportant document on the Stock Exchange, still witches believers and agnostics alike, merely as a piece of literature; so the art of Botticelli, a stumbling-block to the man-in-the-street, a thing of foolishness to the up-to-date actualist, is felt to be something too sacred for babbling in public by many an one who can appreciate modernity as keenly as those whose vision is bounded by it. To these latter it is especially irritating to find the idol of their inmost shrine dragged forth and exalted with specious and inflated popularity, to find him detached from his surroundings, by worshippers who prize him chiefly for his "eccentricities," who call him "quaint," and set him on high as lord of Liberty fabrics, and the guardian saint of economic bric-à-brac. These devotees frame photographs of his pictures and hang them amid Japanese fans made into wall pockets, or place them on easels bedecked with cheap silk handkerchiefs.

Pedants are greatly troubled concerning the authenticity of certain canvases hitherto accepted as genuine

The Dome

Botticellis. Whether this Madonna would stand the test of their analytical measurements and monologues, I cannot say. Two or three paintings at present honourably placed in the great galleries of Europe are about to be re-attributed. But what matters it? Who cares whether the Odyssey was written by Homer or "another man of the same name"? When we speak of Sandro Botticelli, or of Filipepi, it is but using a picturesque synonym, which really implies "the artist, whoever he proves to be, who created the 'Primavera,' or this Madonna, or any other work which happens to be the subject under discussion." If you prefer to say it was by another hand, it merely proves there were two painters equally gifted, instead of one. Even should each "Botticelli" find a new claimant, then the name-label now upon them might still be kept to denote the school and preserve the tradition gathered around it. The pictures would suffer nothing by such change. The labels of European galleries, in recent years, have become affected by Cook's disease, and seized with a mania for travel, slipping from frame to frame at the bidding of experts. Yet who except dryasdusts will pay one less visit to the "Nativity" of the National Gallery, or the "Virgin and Child" of the Louvre? Indeed, it lends a zest to curiosity; it shows the pictures are still vitally attractive even to pedants. Some years they are orthodox examples; then again come periods of strangely unfamiliar labels that raise doubt; then, often enough, in a few more years they revert again to Botticelli.

Sandro Botticelli

But to their real lover they keep perennially fresh among the earliest flowers of the spring of Art; the first new blossoming after the Greeks and the Great Pan had left the world to ascetic self-contemplation or dreary commonplace. Then Botticelli arose, and as a master convinced even his contemporaries, possibly against their will—so he has convinced modern people against theirs. And this is surely the proof by which a master stands revealed, whether he be Botticelli or Mr. Whistler—that even if you are repelled at first, it is only to become subject later. Unless a painter wield this power he can surely be no master, but merely the mouthpiece of the mob.

Gleeson White.

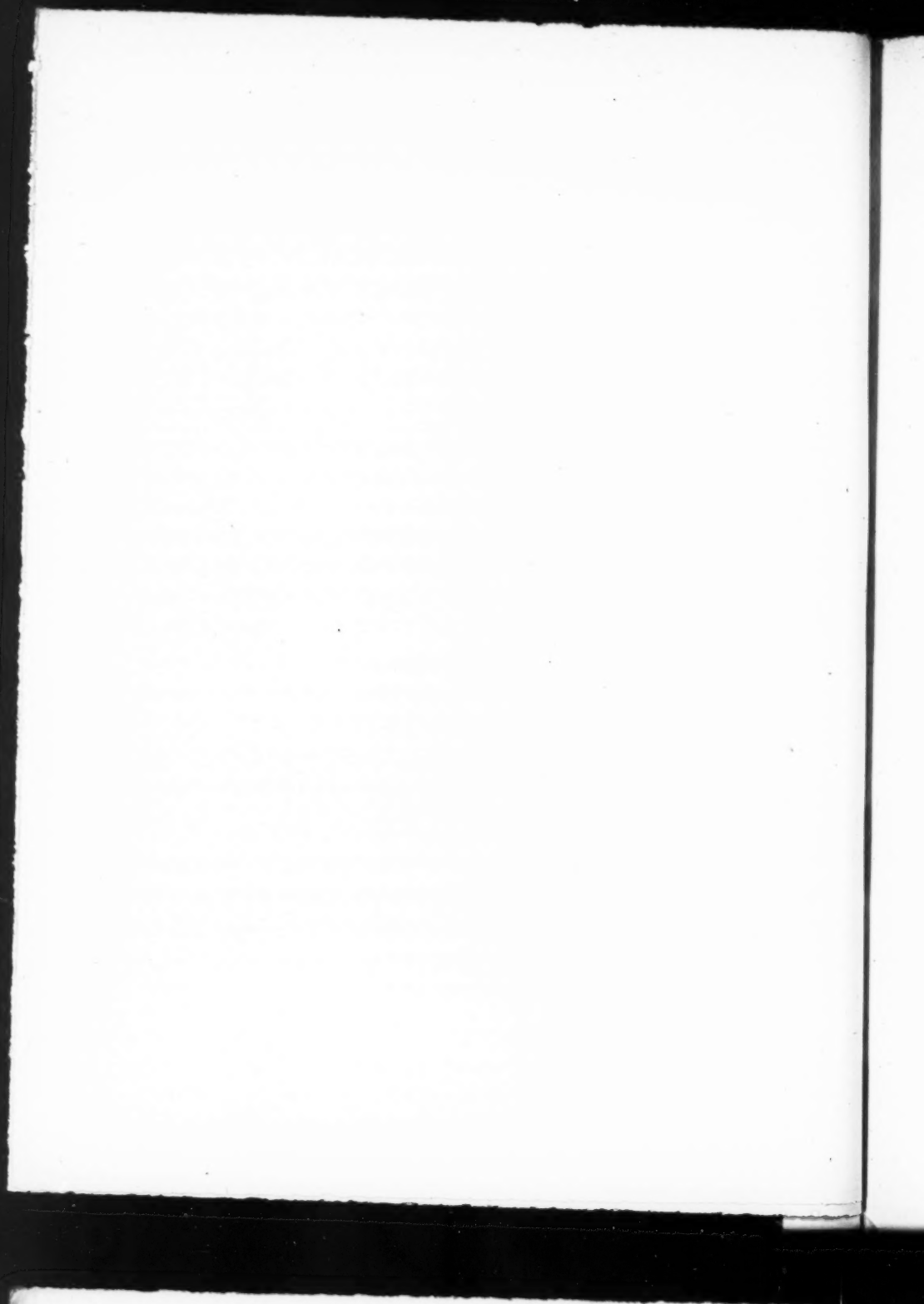
A Memorandum for Collectors

One hundred India Proofs of "Cattle Grazing" have been signed by Mr. Frank Mura, and may be obtained direct from the Publishers, price Half-a-Guinea each.

Mr. H. W. Brewer has also signed one hundred large-paper Proofs of the "City Gate," which are offered on the same terms as "Cattle Grazing."

An Édition de luxe of "The Dome," limited to one hundred copies, has been printed on hand-made paper and elegantly bound. The price is Five Shillings net.

Music



Impromptu amoroso.

Piano *Andante molto espressivo* *Edgardo Levi.*

Animando

f *cres.*

Un poco animato

ff *cres.* *Sost.* *pp* *lento* *Rall.* *Dim.*

1° tempo *Rall.* *Morendo*

f

O Candido Cuor!

After Heinrich Heine:

Edgardo Levi.

Andante Sostenuto, molto espressivo.

piu... heed... *pp* *armonioso* *rall...* *col canto p*

un poco piu *ped* *read.*

La ne... ra men to... gna Cas-sar... la bi-
This false... suit of pride Love cast bold-ly a-

O Candido Cuor

Rit. *Ten^o*

so - gna lo amo con sen - si Chio ba - ci il suo
side love I love thee! My bliss be! Oh, kiss me white

f..... *colla voce*

Lento

cor! M' inten - di, mi
heart! I love thee! my

Lento *p* *legato*

Molto lento *pp*

sen - si O
kiss be! Ah

Ritenuato *pp* *armonioso*

can - di - do cuor!
kiss me white heart!

p *ppp* *ppp*

2 ped ped

N immer glaub' ich, junge Schöne,
Was die spröde Lippe spricht;
Solche grosse schwarze Augen
Solche hat die Tugend nicht.

Diese braungestreifte Lüge
Streif sie ab; ich liebe dich.
Lass dein weisses Herz mich küssen,
Weisses Herz, versteht du mich?

Henrich Heine.



La Tourterelle

Pas trop lent

p

Ped ~~~~~ ** Ped* ~~~~~ ***

J'ai per-du ma tour-te-rel-le, N'est-ce point el-le Que

p *dolce* *^*

J'ois? N'est-ce point el-le? Je veux al-ler a-près

J'ai Perdu ma Tourterelle

dim *rall*

el-le Tou-jours plain-dre Je me dois

p a tempo

Tu regret-tes ta fe-mel-le. Hé-las ain-si fais je

p a tempo

molto con expres

moi, Ah! J'ai per-du ma tour-te-rel-le

Ah! Tou-jours plain-dre Je me dois

a tempo

The Dome

En ne voyant

plus ma belle, Plus rien de beau Je ne vois, Plus rien de

dolce
beau Je veux aller après elle

dim *rall*
Toujours plaindre Je me dois Mort, Que

J'ai Perdu ma Tourterelle

a tempo *cres*

tant de fois J'ap-pel-le, Prends ce qui se donne a

a tempo *cres*



molto con espress

toi. Ah!~~~~~ J'ai per-du ma tour-te-rel le



rall

Ah!~~~~~ Tou-jours plain-dre Je~~~~~ me dois

rall

*Ded~~~~~**



Reviews and Notices.

A Vision. The Words by Lady Lindsay; the Music by Edgardo Levi. London: E. Ascherberg & Co.

The Return of Spring. The Words by Percy Pinkerton; the Music by Edgardo Levi. London: E. Ascherberg & Co.

Neither of these songs is equal to the same composer's superb *Leggenda Antica*, published at Florence by Venturini a few years ago. The *Leggenda Antica* and its companion compositions, however, were big songs—big duets, rather, for voice and piano—written for a few artists of ripe musicianship, while *A Vision* and *The Return of Spring*, though immeasurably ahead of the average drawing-room ballad, can be easily rendered and appreciated by many people who at present waste their time and pains upon compositions which are generally sickly and almost invariably undistinguished. *A Vision* is full of haunting pathos and sweetness; and in *The Return of Spring*, the *moderato animato*, after the first full close, with its fine modula-

The Dome

tions and the trippingly syncopated accompaniment, is brimful of vernal sweetness and light.

The Dome. A Quarterly, containing Examples of All the Arts. London: The Unicorn Press.

As there are already quite twice as many magazines in existence as there ought to be, we are a little sorry that the Editor of this latest addition to their numbers has not condescended to spare half-a-dozen pages for an account of his Aims. He probably imagines that the very unwieldy sub-title tells the public quite enough; and, indeed, in one sense it tells them too much, for, while promising Examples of All the Arts, there is not so much as a reference to Sculpture, Poker-work, or Self-defence; and to make the sub-title good, something should surely have been said about Amateur Bent-iron-work (Revived Young Ladies' Victorian). For this exiguity of representative examples, however, *The Dome* endeavours to compensate by a surplusage of fads. The illustrations, for instance, are all placed together in one section—no doubt to meet the case of those superfine persons who profess to be shocked at finding "repro-" at the bottom of one page, and then, after four pages of title, picture, and blanks, "duction" at the top of what ought to be the next. Of the superfine person, however,—although he (or, more probably, she) will certainly faint away at the coarseness of our parable,—we should like to inquire whether suet should permeate a pudding, or lurk lumpwise in the middle,



Reviews

like an apple in a dumpling. If the superfine person is at all costs to be coddled, we predict for *The Dome* a very short career.

The pictures might in some instances be worse, though it is a great pity that more care has not been exercised, so as to get them exactly into the centre of the page. Mr. Mura's "Cattle Grazing" is very unfinished, and has not come out clearly in reproduction. Mr. Martin Schongauer, in his "Annunciation," affects an old-fashioned manner, but we must protest against his treatment of the Father, which is both irreverent and unbeautiful. The letterpress strikes us most by its omissions. Has the Editor not yet heard of the Kailyard School? The play by Mr. J. E. Woodmeald, in which he harps yet again on the tedious theories of Art which made his *Lady Lohengrin* unreadable, might well have been omitted, and its place filled by a brightly written account of something relating to the Diamond Jubilee of our Queen's Record Reign. To ignore the subject completely in a magazine started in this memorable year smacks to us of disloyalty. Mr. Gleeson White, too, annoys us, remarking with all the foppishness of the Culchawd Person, that to avow a fondness for Botticelli and Browning just now "requires courage"—simply, forsooth, because they are popular.

Possibly with a view to containing an Example of the Art of Foolery, *The Dome* has the bad taste to print a review of itself, in which clumsy fun is supposed to be poked at the Editor and contributors. This is appar-

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ently meant to be funny, but it impresses us as simply senseless, and almost vulgar—its last paragraph especially so.

Jeanne D'Arc. Par M. Boutet de Monvel. Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie.

Anticipating the tardy but inevitable decree of the Roman Congregation, M. Boutet de Monvel has himself canonised his country's Maid; for, rejecting the full-bodied and carnal colours which appropriately flaunt themselves on the pages of certain very clever but sometimes too "pleasant" albums, he has set forth the Maid's saintly life in the hues of dreams, of painted glass, of heaven—delicate, virginal, spiritual. He has given us the ecclesiastic's lemon-coloured vestment, the magical halo surrounding Jeanne's angel visitants, and the pale patches of weird light on the sombre floor as she stands before her judges. Not that these are forceless and effeminate designs. Indeed, some of the battle-pieces—placed on the pages in the Japanese way—though composed in the same key as the trances and visions, are so brisk, and so adequately scored, that they are full of dash and vigour; especially in one case, where the head of a war-horse thrusts itself impetuously far out of the frame of the picture. Once or twice we are reminded of M. Puvis de Chavannes, but anyone might have been proud to produce this superb volume.

The Dome

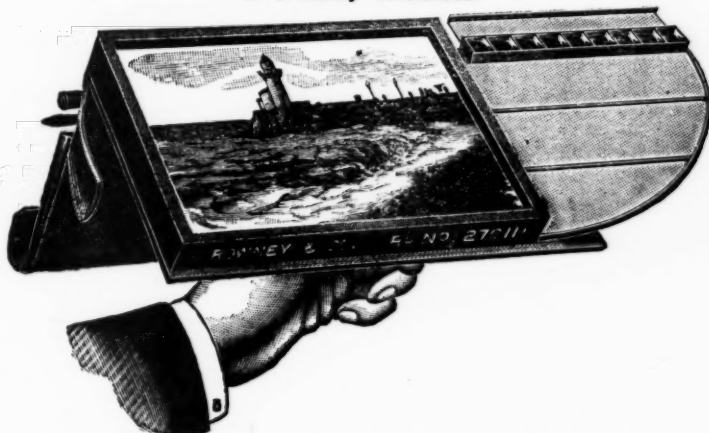
The Dürer Society. Hon. Treasurer: Frederick Whelen, 59 Rossetti Mansions, Cheyne Walk, S.W.
Hon. Secretary: Sid M. Peartree, 12 Chalcot Gardens, Haverstock Hill, N.W.

As we have already printed a reproduction of Dürer's "St. Eustace" for publication in the second number of *The Dome*, and intend also to present in each issue two or three examples of German and Italian engraving in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we feel a kindling of brotherly love for the Dürer Society, membership in which will be limited to 250 subscribers of one guinea per annum. Each member will receive in a portfolio the year's publications of the Society, comprising about a score of facsimiles of Dürer and his school. Many familiar names grace the preliminary circular, and the secretary informs us, as we go to press, that Mr. Henry Holiday, the well-known designer of stained glass, has just joined the committee.

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